2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

they only eat pumpkin leaves', i.e. where game is short and the people have to rely on vegetable relishes. They refer to a visit to a village on a big river as, 'He has gone to eat fish with So-and-So.' The fortunes of each district are discussed year by year and villages described as 'with hunger' (*pa nsala*) or the converse, 'with beer' (*pa bwalua*), i.e. with so much grain that they can make beer frequently. The seasonal changes in food, and the stages in its production, give their names to the periods of the year. While a definite calendar of moons exists (cf. Chap. XVIII) the Bemba more often time events as having taken place 'in the hunger months', i.e. the last months of the rains when the millet supply is low; or 'when we were eating mushrooms', 'when the *mupundu* fruit was ripe', and 'when we were reaping, sowing', &c., and the ages of babies are usually reckoned by dating their births in this manner.

The position of the Bemba traveller, dependent as he is on the hazards of hospitality, provides a further element of uncertainty. The correct greeting to one who has returned from a journey is *Mwalyeni bwino*, 'Have you eaten well?' To which the courteous reply is *Kulila mulelya*, 'Provided you have eaten well yourself', or *E Mukwai kufipwishya*, 'Yes, sir, I eat everything up completely', or else *Fia kwa cilime bafipwa kano wa kulapo yanda*, 'It would have been impossible to finish up all the crops unless you had built a house alongside', i.e. it was so plentiful. There is a regular form of magic used to ensure a guest's arrival before a meal has been finished and not after. A knot tied in the grass with the right formula repeated will secure this result, and I found my staff even performed this rite on my own behalf if at all doubtful as to my reception on a visit to unknown English hosts.

Besides this direct interest in the food he is going to eat in the day, or the beer he may have the luck to come in time for, the secondary values acquired by food give it an added emotional interest to the Bemba. It must be remembered that there is no other way of accumulating wealth in this area except by acquiring sufficient food to feed many followers. The giving or receipt of food is a part of most economic transactions, and may come to represent a number of human relationships whether between different kinsmen or between subject and chief. For this reason the whole question of handling or dividing food acquires tremendous emotional significance for the native, and discussions of personalities or legal relationships tend to be ultimately expressed in this

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

789 reaping, a little knot of millet is usually tied in the centre of the
243 garden and a small fire lit underneath upon which a potsherd full of water is set to heat. Medicine is thrown on top when the steam begins to rise. It is believed that this medicated steam travels right through the field (*ukufutikila*). After this a little paste made of the old year's flour is dabbed here and there on the new heads of grain (*ukusansa*). In some families the first grain is carried back to the village in a special basket and the empty granary must be smoked with the same medicine before it is filled. It is common, too, for a little porridge made with old and new flour mixed to be given to two small boys to eat ('Because the stomachs of small children get quickly filled'). The remains of the porridge added to a basket of new grain is then tipped into the granary by one of the little boys who shouts, 'You granary fill up now!' (*We butala uisule!*).

789 In conclusion, the Bemba consider it more or less normal for food to be scarce, and both their agricultural system and methods of distribution make it impossible entirely to prevent such a happening. Traditional magic belief teaches that only by supernatural means can the dangers of a shortage be avoided. This firm conviction combined with the temperamental optimism of the Bemba and their lack of interest in hard agricultural work makes them believe that somehow something will happen. *Butala mumina ua lusato.* 'A granary is like the oesophagus of the python', i.e. you think it looks very small, but really it can enlarge to hold a great deal.

The people's system of measurement and their material equipment makes it difficult for them to estimate their supplies exactly, and in any case it does not pay them to have much more food than their relatives stored in their granaries. All these reasons account for their failure to achieve that attitude of mind which the European describes as 'foresight' or 'thrift'.

Material Possessions of the Bemba.

●556 The problem of the annual shortage of the Bemba must now be considered from the general economic point of view as distinct from that of the individual housekeeper. What incentives have the Bemba as a whole to accumulate sufficient surplus to provide them with a margin of safety in case of calamity? It is clear that there is not sufficient food grown in the country, but is

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

it certain that if production were higher and if, for example, the soil were better and the labour supply more ample, that the people would fill bigger granaries and secure a better diet? This question must be answered in the light of the dominant economic interests of this particular tribe and their conceptions of wealth. We know that many primitive people accumulate large stores of food from motives entirely different from our own. The Trobriand Islanders make stacks of yams far beyond their ordinary daily needs in order to fill the yam stores of their sisters' husbands, and to acquire kudos by this fulfilment of their kinship dues. They delight in producing surplus food in order to display it and offer it in public exchange. Other Melanesian and Polynesian peoples work as seems to us unnecessarily hard in order to pile up supplies for periodic feasts. But W. E. Armstrong and F. E. Williams have shown how such feasts in south-eastern New Guinea gave a great stimulus to social and economic life and have argued against their suppression even on economic grounds.[1] Similar examples of the social importance of accumulating animal or vegetable food, as apart from its use as a food-supply, could be given from all over the world. We have to ask ourselves, therefore, whether the Bemba reckon wealth in terms of surplus food and whether prestige is attached to its possession. Since the economic values of a primitive people are inevitably affected profoundly by contact with Europeanism, it will be necessary to answer these questions to make a comparison between conditions as they probably existed at the end of the nineteenth century and are still operative in the more remote parts of the country, and those newer ideas of wealth which are found among natives in closer contact with white civilization.

To begin with, it can be said quite categorically that neither in pre-European days, nor at the present, were or are a man's possessions in food or other objects used as a measure of his social status. The material possessions of the Bemba are too limited and of too impermanent a character. A glance inside a Bemba hut will show how few objects it actually contains even at the present day. The poverty of the people, judged by our standards, is striking, and it is remarkable even compared with the neighbouring tribes. One axe, one spear, one hoe, a bed-mat, four or five cooking

[1] F. E. Williams, 'Depopulation of the Suan District', *Anthrop. Report, Papua*, No. 13, 50–6.

[415] One axe, one spear, one hoe, a bed-mat, four or five cooking
42a
556

pots, and the same number of baskets and a couple of blankets would be the usual equipment. Few men own more than one [291] cloth, or an outfit of European clothes such as shorts and a shirt, or the tattered remnants of these. Women rarely have more than one frock or cloth. Besides these, the people treasure certain hereditary objects of no economic value such as the bow of the man, the bead girdle (*umushingo*) of the woman, and certain beads, [231] ivory bracelets, or anklets. A few Bemba own goats and sheep, and many keep chickens and pigeons. All these possessions are individually owned and bequeathed to descendants according to rule, 428 i.e. the heirlooms described above descend to the legal heirs, the maternal nephews or grandsons. Any personal property made by a man, or acquired by his efforts, may go to his own sons, his wife, or his sister, as the case may be. His clothes or money, or his hut, for the year or two it remains habitable, go to his wife or his children, and the working pots and baskets to the wife or the sister.

556 If the material possessions of the Bemba are few in number,
422 they are also impermanent. Few objects can be reckoned as lasting more than four or five years. It is impossible to protect the wood of houses and furniture from the ravages of white ants, and the same applies to baskets, mats, and most of the other contents of an ordinary hut. Even sacred relics guarded with the utmost care seem to have been frequently destroyed in the past by insects or fire, and most of the surviving heirlooms are those of iron or copper, ivory, or a few beads. This in itself affects the people's attitude to property, and the social values associated with its accumulation.

436 To turn to present-day conditions, it must be realized that a
465 money income is not yet a universal measure of wealth in this community. The amount of money the individual Bemba handles each year is very small. I put it at 15*s.* to £1 on an average (cf. Chap. X). Money can only be obtained by work for Europeans or occasionally for fellow Africans. The average unskilled wage was 7*s.* 6*d.* a month during my stay, and the opportunities for regular employment in the country were very few.[1] Practically only the domestic servants and clerks could be considered as regular wage earners, and these were naturally a very small proportion of the community. A certain amount of money is said to

[1] Cf. the figures for absentee labour given in Chapter I. It was reckoned in 1934 that in the Kasama area only 30 per cent. could have earned their tax of 10*s.* locally.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

622
554

territory, as well as his village, has a bad reputation, and this often happens at the present day, although formerly a commoner had little power to leave his chief's country.

This desire to attain authority, whether over slaves, kinsmen, villagers, courtiers, or the inhabitants of a district is, therefore, the dominant factor we have to consider. The accumulation of food is entirely secondary to it, and only exists in so far as it permits the necessary concentration of service, as for instance, in the chief's capital. Meat and beer are needed, as we saw, to feed labourers, relatives, and courtiers, and are essential to the working of the tribal machine. To give with a flourish was the glory of chieftainship, as Livingstone found when the Citimukulu of his day (Citapankwa) sent after him the ivory tusk he had sat on because he had touched it.[1] Actual possession of great quantities of foodstuffs does not seem to have been a particularly cherished ambition of the Bemba. They valued a reputation for giving, not for having, and the distribution of food brought by villagers as tribute or levied as toll on the conquered peoples was a measure of wealth. Old men boast to-day about the amount the former chiefs used to take from the Bisa or surrounding peoples, and they respected a man who was able to exact the biggest levy of such tribute. I never heard a chief boast to another about the size of his granaries, but often about the amount of food brought to him and distributed by him.

622
556

In fact chiefs particularly valued the fact that some of their food was brought to them and not grown in their gardens, for it gave them some kind of resource to fall back upon. The Bemba say: 'We will shake the tree until it gives up its fruit', that is to say we will nag the big man until he divides his supplies. If a chief attempted to dry meat and keep it for subsequent division his followers would sit and stare at it and talk about it until he was forced to give them some, but supplies brought irregularly from other villages provided constant fresh resources.[2]

Therefore the chief seems to have aimed at having just sufficient crops to put him in a position of security, but not at increasing

[1] Gouldsbury and Sheane, *The Great Plateau of Northern Rhodesia*, 1911, p. 17.

[2] An interesting illustration of this fact is that the paramount chief often asked me to keep his quarterly salary from the Government because 'Otherwise my children and grandchildren will keep on coming and will do obeisance and ask for cloths'.

2:Richards £-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

his supplies indefinitely. To-day the big chiefs make proper gardens every two years (*ukutema pakalamba*), and fill enormous granaries which they reckon to last for two seasons or more. They definitely do not try to produce the maximum amount of food possible each year as the following table shows. It appears that

Annual Cultivation by Four Chiefs

1 = Full cultivation. ½ = Small gardens.
0 = No cultivation. .. = No records obtained.

	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
Citimukulu	..	..	..	..	..	1	½	1
Nkula	1	0	1	½	½	1	0	½
Mwamba	..	1	0	Village moved	0	1	½	½
Nkolemfumu	..	..	..	..	..	1	0	0

this was always the custom even when labour was easier to get. Thus the *mfumu* had about four times as much food accumulated as a commoner, but there was not a much greater difference than this between them. In any case the difference in wealth was a difference in power to distribute, not in the amount possessed.

The position of the commoner is different. Not only has he no reason to accumulate beyond a certain point, sufficient to give him enough to eat and to distribute in a small way, but he is also afraid to do so. To be much better off than his fellows would be dangerous. A man who is full when others are hungry is hardly considered to have achieved the good fortune by natural means. An occasional stroke of good luck is not resented, but to be permanently much more prosperous than the rest of the village would almost certainly lead to accusations of sorcery.[1] It might also be thought presumptuous (*icilumba*), an aping of the chief, and it would certainly cause a number of elderly female relatives to come and claim support from the lucky man. For these reasons the Bemba not only aims at a very modest competence, but he usually denies that he is as well off as he is. Unlike the Trobriand Islanders who boast about the fullness of their yam stores, the Bemba invariably denies that he has any food at all: 'We've simply swept the granary clean' (*twapyangafye*!) is his usual comment.[2]

[1] One of the reasons witchcraft is so much more common in urban areas where inequality in wealth is so much more striking.

[2] Compare the structure of the Trobriand granary designed to reveal the

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

556 We can see in fact that as far as the production of a large surplus of millet is concerned there were no strong motives in this society to do so, either to attain kudos, to fulfil marriage contracts, to increase material prosperity, or to leave wealth to the next generation.

New Economic Ambitions.

556 177 This general attitude to accumulation exists to a large extent to-day, and among the older men the same political ambitions remain operative. The desire to build up a village is still very pronounced, and I have known cases where members of the royal clan, earning good wages at the mines, threw up their jobs if offered a headmanship at home. In the same way, I found that young men who had succeeded to some headmanship or small office, such as a hereditary priesthood, early in life, preferred to hold this position rather than leaving to work for Europeans.

177 291 556 But for the rest of the community the introduction of British rule, money, and European goods has cut completely across old economic objectives with marked effects on the food-supply. In particular, the strength of the Bemba craving for clothes is almost impossible to explain to a reader without African experience. To understand it, it would be necessary to listen to the constant talk of natives about clothes and prices anywhere near a white town, to watch the men and women crowding round the European stores in a place like Kasama—where the tailors sit and machine their customers' frocks in the street—or to see the swagger of the booted and trousered young man in front of the women of his village. This would give some idea of the passionate desire of these people to possess, by some means or other, European clothes. It must be remembered that cloth was always thought valuable in this area since its first appearance in the hands of Arab traders in the middle of the nineteenth century. Bales of cloth were exchanged for slaves and remained the chiefs' monopoly, so that to wear cotton cloth, as distinct from the local bark-cloth, was a sign of royal favour. In any case the Bemba, like the Luba-speaking peoples of the Congo, have been described as fully clothed up to their armpits by the earliest

contents and that of the Bemba in which even the householder is not quite aware of the amount of food she possesses. B. Malinowski, Coral Gardens and *their Magic*, 1935, vol. i, pp. 242–3, 245–55, 257.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

travellers in those regions.[1] So the desire for garments of some sort is not a new one, but it is the first time in history that it has been open to commoners, as distinct from chiefs and notables, to raise their status in this way. Clothes are a source of excitement and delight at this stage of transition, and a sign of distinction between the civilized man and the bush native.[2]

I have described this craving for European goods because it directly affects the production and storage of food. Conditions in this area are such that money cannot be regularly earned or accumulated, or used to produce an all-round improvement in the standard of living. But the desire for clothes is at present one of the chief incentives which drives men to leave the territory to look for work, and a man gone to the mines is said to be away 'clothing his wife'. Further, as regards the stay-at-home native, it can be said at once that where millet can be sold for money, either to Europeans or to urban natives, the natives always succumb to the temptation. It is unfortunate that in this area the chief saleable crop is a staple food, for it means that the people sell their supplies often at the lowest prices without thought of the hunger they must presently suffer. Dealers in grain will tell you that in times of famine millet is often produced somehow and from somewhere, if only it can be sold for money. I have myself seen women near the motor road sell their last basket of grain for a cheap cotton vest torn in a week with the hard garden work. The old realistic attitude towards the value of food described in Chapter III seems completely abandoned in these circumstances. Old men sometimes say: 'You can't fill your belly with shillings', but the younger men and women would rather go without food than clothing, and wherever money has been substituted for tribal obligations formerly paid in work or foodstuffs, these sums are never spent on food, but always on European goods. The cases of the payments to the father-in-law have already been described, but it is equally true that money paid to the chief in lieu of his garden labour would

[1] As compared with the Ila on the Kafue River who have remained naked until very recently.

[2] A missionary, clad himself in an open shirt, shorts, and sandals, once asked one of his teachers why he went about on a sweltering day in a thick suit with long woollen stockings and two shirts. The teacher replied: 'You could go naked but people would still know you had clothes in your cupboard, but if I didn't wear my clothes people would say I was an uneducated fellow with nothing more than a pair of shorts.'

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

177 291 556 probably not be used for this purpose but for acquiring European objects of different kinds.

556 To conclude, we are dealing with an economic system in which the accumulation of large quantities of any type of material goods was neither very possible nor considered desirable. The accumulation of food was not an end in itself for the chief or notable, but rather a means to enable him to build up a large following of people which was to him the highest aim in life. His economic assets consisted in rights over food produced by others as well as in the cultivation of millet himself. For the commoner, the possession of excessive food supplies was definitely considered unsuitable, and people were afraid to admit they had such a store. In short the surplus crop was not a Bemba ideal. Under modern conditions the desire for European goods, and in particular clothes, leads the people to squander even their available food supplies on objects which have become more important to them.

The Use of Money.

436 177 Money has been used in this territory for about thirty years. The first white administrators in the district were told to encourage its circulation as 'a civilizing influence' and, as soon as possible, wages were paid and taxes levied in currency and not in kind. European stores were opened shortly after, and very few of these shops will now accept payment in kind instead of money. It is, therefore, worth considering this specific question: Has the introduction of a money currency facilitated the distribution of food?

436 In the first place, the use of coins in everyday life is still very limited. This is chiefly due to the shortage of money in the area as a whole. No native could hope to substitute cash payments for all his present kinship obligations or other needs of life because he would rarely be in a position to do so. But it is also a fact that the Bemba still use money in a completely different fashion from our own. They regard it as a medium to be used in specific transactions only. These are, naturally, the purchase of European goods and the payment of tax, and, less obviously, marriage payments, sums paid for native crafts, the fulfilment of ceremonial obligations, and debts of honour. The Bemba buy European goods with money because they can get them in no other way. They pay taxes in money for the same reason. The substitution of small sums for the marriage payment has been an easy transition from

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

commensurable value to the incommensurable gratitude, friendship, or respect which he wants to express. He prefers to exchange his coins for some other object, possibly of far less practical value to the recipient. The African chief, on the contrary, is more flattered on receiving a coin, however small, than anything else, because, as he says: 'money is respect (*umucinshi*)'. Small coins are constantly used as presents of honour to relatives, and it is quite common for a servant who wants to make an elegant gift to his white master to do so by presenting him with a threepenny or a sixpenny bit. Sums of money are used as compensation in cases of injury or insult.

In particular ceremonies money again performs special functions. At a marriage or an initiation rite coins are used instead of the old bark-cloth, and also as a payment for ritual services or as a means of removing taboos. Sixpence or a shilling may be offered to the woman who lights a girl's fire on the morning after her marriage, to those who whitewash the hut after a funeral ceremony, or to remove a taboo on eating. At the ceremonial founding of the chief's new village there is now a fixed tariff ranging from 1*s*. to 10*s*. for the hereditary priests who are in charge of the rites, such as the lighter of the sacred fire, the opener of the sacred relic huts, or those who purify the chief, wake him ceremonially in the morning, or beat his hereditary drum. In all these cases the coins are used as valuables much as the ivory tusks, cloth, or bracelets of old days were employed, and their rarity makes them the most suitable objects available at the present day.

With this special attitude to money, it is not surprising that the Bemba still consider it waste to use coins for the purchase of food. money is too rare and too hardly come by to be thrown away on a commodity that can be got in some other way. Only a few years before my visit an old woman was discovered dying of starvation in a disused hut on the motor road with a 2*s*. piece tied in a fold of her cloth. It had apparently never occurred to her to use the money to buy supplies on her journey to the mines to look for her son. Younger people have naturally changed in this respect, but it is still true to say that money is never 'wasted' (*ukuposa*) on food unless it is absolutely necessary, as it is near the white towns. Even then the transition to a sale from a gift from a kinsman or a subject is a very gradual one. People buying from relatives pay less than the normal rate, and usually add some service to the transaction Chiefs buying from subjects, as we shall see, pay nominal

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

sums for a particular object against the background of the complicated interchange of services in which the relationship of chief and commoner consists. They pass from one economic system to the other in the course of a day or a week, and they still consider such transactions irregular or out of the usual. They are not calculating to save money, nor do they rely on it in the ordinary course of events.

The Bemba wants money occasionally, and then in relatively speaking large sums—10*s*. for his tax or 5*s*. for a cloth. These sums he usually wants urgently, and is prepared to make unusual efforts to earn the money or to sell any property he has to get it. Less than a given amount apparently seems to him almost useless. In fact, when opportunities of earning money are so scarce the gap between 1*s*. and 10*s*. may well seem unbridgeable, and hence there is no attempt to save in order to reach the higher sum. I noticed that in the outlying districts natives who brought goods for sale asked for the specific sum they wanted almost irrespective of the amount of food they were selling. If I refused, I was often told: 'Well, 5*s*. is what I want, if you won't give me 5*s*., please take it as a present.' In the latter case the native returned to the old system of exchange by which presents offered put the recipient under an obligation to return and, if possible, to return more than he had been given. In the same way, carriers called out for labour will go on long journeys but do not like to sign up for short ones. The idea of regularly accumulating small sums of money in order to acquire greater ones only exists among natives who have a regular earning capacity, and it is natural that it should be so. The old attitude of the Bemba towards the amassing of food and goods, combined with their present limited opportunities for acquiring money, absolutely prevents the regular saving of money to be used to purchase better food.

The introduction of money has encouraged natives to sell more millet than they should, but its circulation is not sufficient to make it useful as a general means of exchange, and the people's attitude to its use still prohibits them working for a regular sale and exchange of food, such as will be necessary if the kinship system of the people still further breaks down.

Types of Exchange.

In this connexion it will be useful to summarize the traditional attitude of the Bemba towards trade or barter itself, and to describe

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

585 burning log out of his hut to the crowd of waiting relatives outside. This is proof of his virility: the women shrill their plaudits and the men shout. The bride is given her marriage pot at dawn by her father's sister, and then follows the presentation of the bride and bridegroom to the community. Later comes the setting up of the fire-place for the girl and still later, perhaps after a year or two, the giving to the son-in-law of his granary and his garden.

421 The form of social structure I have described exists in a culture in which there is no permanent form of property, such as land or cattle, which could bind the members of a kinship group together or link one generation with the next. Consequently, social relations in Bemba society consist very largely of the giving and receiving of services.

556 622 606 604 Wealth consists of the power to command service such as a chief calls for from his subjects, a headman from his villagers, a father-in-law from his son-in-law, or a mother's brother from his maternal nephews. Service could also be demanded in the old days from surrounding tribes which were raided for slaves.

556 Service makes it possible for a man to put big fields under cultivation, to build a big granary and hence to be able to feed more workers in another year.

622 Service was given to the chief in return for food provided at the capital and also the supernatural powers on which the people believed they depended. Service was given to the headmen from some of these motives also, but the headman was also usually a relative and he received these dues in his capacity as head of a kinship group. Those not so closely related he had to attract by a nice mixture of authority and the formal expression of courtesy.

576 622 In such a society the ceremonial expression of respect by kneeling to a superior, clapping hands before him, offering him food in a specially formal fashion, or even rolling on the back is characteristic. Men should creep into the presence of their chief, throw themselves over on their backs and roll from side to side clapping their hands; the abject humility of the gesture is striking to the European observer. In such circumstances it will be readily understood that the father-in-law attracts his son-in-law not only by the economic support he provides but by much formal giving of food

606

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

for which the women in the household are almost entirely respon- 606
sible. The son-in-law in his turn behaves respectfully towards the elder members of his wife's family. The tensions which I have described as inherent in a matrilocal marriage system of this kind make these presentations very significant in maintaining a family and village structure which, as I have explained, is one of rather precarious balance.

Accepted sex roles. Social structure, as I have used the term here, 554
consists of a series of social roles which are associated with membership of the different social groups of which the tribe is composed, or with different status positions in it or with formalized relationships, such as that of subject to chief. In the present connection the roles which are of special interest are those based on sex and age and the social behaviour expected of husband and wife.

The ideal of a Bemba in the old days was military success and with it the exaction of tribute and slaves from conquered peoples. This is arrogantly expressed in the phrase 'We Bemba cultivate with the spear and not the hoe'. Patient industry in agriculture was not as much admired as the power to command service from others. The ability to attract followers by generosity, the elegant exchange of courtesies, and by personal popularity was highly rated. The organizing powers and judgement which are essential to the achievement of either of these aims are admired in themselves.

Thrift and the slow accumulation of property are not admired 556
since they cannot be achieved in terms of Bemba economy. Children are brought up to share everything they have with the group they are with and easy and even reckless giving is praised. Bemba also admire display of all kinds, but here, as may be imagined, the display is not so much of personal possession but of followers and adherents, who walk about with a man of note and praise him.

Bemba admire ceremonious behaviour in personal relations, 576
exact forms of address, the recognition of social precedence and rights to respect, and the avoidance of quarrels, unpleasantness and 'scenes' which might disturb the delicate balance of village relations. They praise suavity and self-control in personal relations. They delight in circumlocutions and allusive speech, and seem [195]
sophisticated in social contacts, as compared with their neighbours, the Bisa.

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

admiration of visitors. (See page 88.) Just as the Bemba headman tries to attract people to come and live in his village and anxiously watches to see whether he is successful in building up a community, so the *nacimbusa* estimates her power by the number of women of eminence who attended throughout or who appeared on visits from time to time.

Present-day differences of income have added to the prestige aspect of the ceremony. A man of substance wants his daughter's chisungu to be talked about. Like an English father who defends the cost of a 'white wedding' by saying 'I wanted to do my best for the girl', a Bemba father will say 'Well, I don't want people to say "That is not a man of wealth! There was little beer to dance the girl in his village." ' There seems even to have been some competition for the privilege of 'owning the chisungu'—between a father and a mother's brother, for instance. It will be remembered that besides the provision of food and beer, respect can also be expressed in Bemba society by songs and feasts.[1]

A really successful chisungu is difficult to carry out under modern conditions since the absence of men and the smaller household groups result in smaller accumulations of food. No large sums of money are exchanged at the chisungu ceremony, so that chiefs and men in authority stand to gain little by a performance. I think these are the reasons why the chisungu has disappeared rather quickly. It is, moreover, organized entirely by women, and male dominance is emphasized in a modern wage-earning society.

The survival of ceremonial is apt to depend on secondary motives of this sort in some parts of Africa, such as Sierra Leone and South Africa. In both contact with missionaries has taken place over a longer period, and the people are much more sophisticated. But, in the case of the Mende, for instance, the chiefs gain a large income from the holding of the *bundu* rite for girls; this is acknowledged to be one of the reasons why it has not only not died out, but it has even increased in influence.[2] The Kriges also point out that some initiation schools in the Northern Transvaal have

[1] A man might give his wife a second marriage ceremony in her old age (the *bwinga* marriage) for respect.

[2] Kenneth Little, 'The role of the secret society in cultural specialization', *American Anthropologist*, April 1949. The privilege of holding Yao initiation ceremonies is greatly valued. (See Appendix A.)

7:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1940 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

(c) Economic Background. The Bemba are an Agri-

cultural people

like most of the Central Bantu group to which they belong. They keep no cattle. Tsetse-fly at present prevents their keeping stock over most of the country, but in any case they seem to have no pastoral traditions, whatever they may have had formerly. Thus they have no means of storing wealth as have the Southern Bantu. Their marriage contracts are fulfilled by service and not by the passage of cattle. In the old days military glory and the extraction of tribute from conquered peoples seems to have been the dominant ambition of the Bemba chiefs, and their wealth consisted in the size of their following and the amount of service they were able to command. This fact profoundly influences their position at the present day (cf. p. 116).

The soil of most of this district is poor and it has not attracted white settlement. The staple crop is finger millet (*eleusine corecana*), while some kafir corn, a little maize, legumes, and pumpkins are also grown. The people practise shifting cultivation of a primitive type, and the plentiful supply of land and the lack of any localized natural resources which might attract the inhabitants to settle in one area rather than another all affect the political system. As has been shown, they decrease the strength of local ties as against political or kinship affiliations, and they account for the fact that the power to distribute land is not an important prerogative of leadership in distinction to conditions in most Southern Bantu tribes.

Hunting and fishing contribute a small share of the food-supply only. Organized marketing does not exist, and under modern conditions no cash crop has been found for this area. This fact, together with the absence of opportunities for local employment, forces the adult male population to look for work outside the tribal area, with resultant effects, as will be seen, on the political system of the tribe.

(*d*) *White Administration.* The type of white administration introduced in this area is described on pp. 112–20.

III. Bases of Authority

The positions of leadership in Bemba society consist of the following offices: (*a*) *territorial rulers* (chiefs and headmen); (*b*) *administrative officers and councillors*; (*c*) *priests, guardians of sacred shrines, and magic specialists with economic functions*; (*d*) *army leaders* in the old days. Succession to all these offices is